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close observation and investigation. Notable instances are the sacred-bag ceremony of the women in connection with the making of a buffalo robe, and the ceremonial finishing of a decorated tipi. In such case the ritual is conducted by the women, and includes prayers, libation, circuits, and feasting, all under the direction of the priestess of the rite. The more we can get of such material the better. The numerous illustrations, including several colored plates, are all reproduced from specimen objects obtained in the tribe, and are fully up to the high standard maintained by the American Museum of Natural History. JAMES MOONEY.

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO AGENCY, OKLAHOMA,

January 15, 1903.

The Night Chant. A Navaho Ceremony. By WASHINGTON MATTHEWS. (Memoirs of the American Museum of National History, vol. vi. Anthropology, vol. v. Publications of the Hyde Southwestern Expedition.) New York: 1902. 4°, xvi + 332 pages, 8 plates, 19 figures.

It is not an easy task to review in a few lines a work of such importance that it must be accorded a leading place among the most notable contributions to our knowledge of Indian ceremony. For nearly forty years Dr Matthews has been an investigator of American ethnology, his first inspiration having been gained, like that of Bourke, Corbusier, Clark, and Scott, while serving in the United States Army on the Indian frontier. His *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians* (1877) is now a classic in ethnologic literature and stands as our only scientific authority on an otherwise almost unknown Siouan tribe. For several years he served in the medical corps of the Army at Fort Wingate, New Mexico, where, largely by means of his own limited resources, he followed the interest aroused in him among the tribes of the two Dakotas, and presented from time to time the results of his studies among the Navaho, one of our most populous as well as least spoiled tribes.

The many obstacles encountered in gathering the material which forms the present monograph, only the student who has pursued investigations of a kindred nature can appreciate; but perhaps only the author himself knows of the difficulties which had to be overcome, during years of physical infirmity, in analyzing and interpreting these mysteries of primitive belief.

The Night Chant, in addition to being the most popular ceremony, is one of the most important rites of the Navaho tribe, for "nearly all the important characters of the Navaho pantheon are named in its myths,

depicted in its paintings, or represented by its masqueraders." It is so intricate and far-reaching that, to use Dr Matthews' words again, "not every one of its priests, even, knows all that is to be known about it; there are different degrees of excellence in their education; one may know some particular song, prayer or observance of which another is ignorant. There are auxiliary rites, not known to all shamans, which are supposed to increase the efficacy of the ceremony according to different indications of Indian mythic etiology. One shaman told me that he studied six years before he was considered competent to conduct his first ceremony, but that he was not perfect then and had learned much afterwards." There is a little wonder, then, that after witnessing many celebrations of the Night Chant, in whole or in part, during nearly eight years' residence in the Navaho country, the study of the ceremony and the collation of the material gathered should have occupied much of the author's spare time during the succeeding twenty-one years. And yet, with characteristic modesty, he adds: "I do not pretend to give a complete account of the ceremony, with all that pertains to it." In view of this frank assertion it is hoped that, among other uses, the memoir may serve as a missionary text-book for those who still believe that all there is to be learned about a tribe may be absorbed during a casual visit or two.

The popular name of the Night Chant is a translation of its native designation *klédze hatál*. The ceremony may be performed only during the frosty season, while the snakes are hibernating, in the same way that the neighboring Pueblos will relate their folktales only during cold weather. The ceremony is designed for healing the sick, and the expenses, which sometimes aggregate three hundred dollars in money and goods, are borne by the patient and his intimate relations. The performance, or rather series of performances, last for nine nights and portions of ten days, and consist of many strange rites in which dramatic personations of no fewer than sixteen gods are represented and in which the laws governing Navaho ceremony are rigidly observed. For example, besides the prescribed season for the performance of the Night Chant, the color symbolism in relation to the cardinal points and the symbolism of sex in relation also to the cardinal directions and to certain natural objects must be recognized, as must a definite sequence in the movements of the participants, laws regulating the making and depositing of the kethawns or sacrificial offerings and messages to the gods, the manufacture and placing of objects with reference to their butts and tips, the measurement of objects used in the ceremony in accordance with established standards, and a thousand and one other things of apparently trivial importance, but

which to the Indian mind are of such moment that a false move might put a stop to the proceedings for a day or a night.

The first sixty-three pages of the memoir are devoted to general observations and a review of the elements of the ceremony. The description is presented in such simple and graphic style that a child might read it with interest, and gain, without passing to the second part ("Rites in Detail," pages 67-155), quite a comprehensive idea of what the Night Chant is, why it is performed, and a general notion of the fearful and wonderful working of the Indian mind. It is this simple, straightforward, unpretentious way that Dr Matthews has of relating his story, however intricate the subject, that has made his writings so enjoyable both to the professional student and to the layman. There is nothing in the work which can arouse the suspicion that the author knows not whereof he speaks—he states as a certainty only that of which he has personal knowledge, and if doubt exists in his mind on any point, the reader is so informed.

Parts III and IV (pages 159-265, 267-304) treat of "Myths" and "Texts and Translations," respectively, the latter consisting of songs and prayers with native texts and interlinear translations. Throughout the work the paragraphs are numbered for ready reference in the explanatory notes which comprise pages 307-316. The index (pages 307-332) is a model in every respect, and this is true of the plates, particularly those in color, which illustrate dry-paintings, masks and other ceremonial paraphernalia, etc. The entire work is a credit to the author, to the Museum under whose auspices it is published, and to the Messrs Hyde through whose liberal patronage science has been so substantially benefited.

The author makes what appears to be an unnecessary apology for his spelling of the name of the tribe whose ceremony he describes. The meaning of *Navaho* is not known, although many attempts have been made to define it. It is not of Spanish derivation, for the first Spaniards to employ the name did not use a form of spelling which would justify such a conclusion; and indeed Spanish writers record even more forms of the tribal designation than there have been modern interpretations of its meaning. Under the circumstances the author is fully warranted in his adoption of the Anglicized "Navaho" in preference to the most popular of the Spanish forms of the name, the pronunciation of which has led so many astray; and as he is the leading authority on the Navaho tribe, it is more than likely that ethnologists in general will continue to follow his example, as the Bureau of Ethnology and the Indian Bureau have already officially done.

F. W. HODGE.